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Sahaj Marg System of Meditation

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Sahaj Marg (the Natural Path) is the system of practical training in spirituality offered by Shri Ram Chandra Mission. It is in essence the well-known old raja yoga (yoga of the mind) remodelled and simplified to help man/woman achieve inner perfection, which is a synonym for God Realization.

According to this teaching, God is simple and therefore, the way to reach Him must be simple. The mind is the key instrument in a human being and by proper regulation of mind through meditation under practical guidance and support of a spiritual master, one can evolve to the highest.

The Sahaj Marg system is specially developed for the average householder. It teaches that normalization of all functions leads to saintliness. Every faculty in-built in man has its legitimate function and must be used in the performance of that function. Therefore, celibacy is not prescribed but a normalization of the generative function is essential. It is in the world of family that almost all of man's powers are perfected. Therefore, this system does not recognize differences of race, sex, or indeed any other differences between individuals — all are qualified to practise it, the sole qualification being willingness to participate in it. The Sahaj Marg system of meditation is being practised in more than 100 countries.

Spirituality

The term 'spirituality' has nothing to do with religion, as commonly understood. According to Sahaj Marg, spirituality begins where religion ends. While the basic education of man can be undertaken by religion, his further development — when he has reached what may be termed adulthood — can only be offered by spirituality. Religion enforces an externalization of the mind in man's search for God. Mysticism or spirituality internalizes the search and directs the mind to the heart of man where the search should really commence.

Spirituality, therefore, focuses man's attention on the divine effulgence radiating in one's own heart, which effulgence is created by the presence of the Creator Himself in the heart. All that spirituality requires of us to achieve the sense of oneness with God, is to focus the mind inwards and approach Him with love.

It is generally believed that meditation requires a lot of preliminary sadhana (practice) and preparation. Sahaj Marg on the contrary says that meditation is a simple thing and it does not require any preparation. In fact meditation can alone prepare the mind.

Yoga, which means union, is the culmination of the spiritual practice and not merely the practice itself. The perfection of the imperfect is what is to be achieved before the union is possible. This is achieved by the cleaning process in Sahaj Marg. This is where the need for a spiritual master comes in most. It is the spiritual master who is able to remove past impressions from our mind and provide the input of divine energy into us which nourishes the soul.

Once a state of spiritually elevated consciousness pervades the individual self, normal worldly life goes on while spiritual progress also follows hand-in-hand, thus bringing into play harmonious and balanced development of the human being in the twin fields of existence, finally culminating in our achieving the goal of human perfection.

Transmission

The most unique feature about Sahaj Marg is called transmission (pranahuti). Shri Ram Chandraji Maharaj of Fatehgarh, the adi-guru (first guru) of this Mission, is said to have re-discovered the capacity for the transmission of yogic or life energy from his own centre of existence into the centre of existence of another individual. This art has been passed on by him to his disciple, Shri Ram Chandraji Maharaj of Shahjahanpur, who has perfected it and in turn passed it on to his successor and spiritual representative, Shri P. Rajagopalachari, the present President of the Mission.

As power can be transmitted, as thought can be transmitted, as speech can be transmitted, so also spirituality can be transmitted. Transmission is defined as the utilization of divine energy for transformation of a human being. When the transmission is made into the heart of the practicant (abhyasi), the practicant is filled with a force higher than himself and therefore, his evolution or progress becomes not only speedier, but also becomes in essence independent of his own capacity for progress. This transmission gives the practicant the possibility of growing without limitations. Secondly, it erases by the Master's power, all past impressions (called samskaras) which we have built up in our mind and which conditions our behaviour and existence. When the past impressions are eradicated, material existence falls into its proper place as does every facet of existence.

This transmission is something which is capable of being felt by anybody who takes the trouble of practising this system for a brief period. In fact it is transmission which sets Sahaj Marg apart from other yogas and from all other systems of human evolution. Transmission under the Sahaj Marg system can be received directly from the Master who is adept in the art, or from preceptors who are also endowed with this power of transmission by the Master.

Preceptors

A preceptor is an abhyasi who has been prepared and permitted by the Master to introduce people to the Sahaj Marg system and conduct group meditation. Preceptors also give individual sittings which clean the deeper impressions and impediments of the abhyasi (spiritual aspirant). Just as the daily impressions may be cleaned by your own efforts, the deeper impressions can only be removed by a capable master. The master works through the preceptor to do this deeper cleaning. In order to begin the practice of Sahaj Marg meditation, it is necessary to contact a preceptor to receive the introductory meditation sittings.

The Role of the Master

In Sahaj Marg, the Master acts as a guide to the aspirant in much the same way as an accomplished mountaineer is a guide to the inexperienced climber. He knows the terrain of the journey first-hand and is able to lead us safely, surely and expeditiously to the goal. There is only one objective behind the Master's relationship with us, and that is our spiritual welfare. The term 'Master' is another word for 'Guru', or spiritual guide. However, in Sahaj Marg, the concept of Master is more closely aligned to the idea of divinity or divine essence.

In Sri Lanka, Sahaj Marg system of meditation is being practised since 1999, mainly in Colombo at 14-4/1 Daya Road, Wellawatte (Phone: 2365388) and also at Kandy, Balagolla and Wattegama.

Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari — "Chariji"

The present living Master of the system, Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari — 'Chariji' — was born on July 24, 1927, in the village of Vayalur near Chennai (Madras), in the south of India.

Chariji's conscious spiritual aspirations were awakened at the age of 18 after hearing a lecture on the Bhagavad-Gita. He took up a detailed study of this book as well as other religious and spiritual texts. At the age of 30, he began Vaishnava traditional instruction in the Hindu religion. Seven years later, in 1964, he met his Master (Babuji) and started the practice of Sahaj Marg meditation.

While continuing to fulfil his familial and business responsibilities, Chariji has dedicated himself to the work of Shri Ram Chandra Mission. Over the years he became Babuji's most devoted disciple, ably assisting him in his spiritual work.

Babuji passed away in 1983, leaving instructions that Chariji should succeed him as spiritual representative and President of the Mission.

Chariji's labours have resulted in remarkable growth and expansion in the Mission's activities all over the world. In recent years he has travelled extensively, conducting seminars and giving instructions on the Sahaj Marg system of meditation. His book My Master, a personal tribute to Babuji, has been published in nearly 20 languages. His other books include diaries of his overseas travels with Babuji, an autobiography, and numerous volumes of his talks in India and abroad, interpreting, amplifying and representing his Master's teachings.

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